

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 19211 070846Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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R 070745Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7271
INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 19211

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR MPOL ASEAN TH KS
SUBJECT: VISIT BY AMBASSADOR SNEIDER

1. ON JULY 3 AMBASSADOR SNEIDER, ACCOMPANIED BY CHARGE, PAID CALLS ON MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE GEN. LEK NAEOMALI AND ON FOREIGN MINISTER UPPADIT PACHARIYANGKUN. DISCUSSIONS DURING THE MEETINGS FOCUSED ON THE KOREAN SITUATION AND U.S. POLICY THERE AS WELL AS THAI MILITARY PROCUREMENT AND CURRENT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDING UPCOMING WASHINGTON MEETING WITH ASEAN MINISTERS.

2. IN DISCUSSING KOREAN SITUATION, AMBASSADOR SNEIDER MADE CLEAR OUR INTENTION TO FULFILL OUR COMMITMENTS THERE AND EXPLAINED IN DETAIL THE PACE OF THE GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL AND THE MEASURES WE ARE TAKING TO COMPENSATE FOR THE WITHDRAWAL. HE ALSO GAVE A CONSTRUCTIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT STATE OF US-ROK RELATIONS. BOTH MINISTERS WERE APPRECIATIVE AND REASSURED BY AMBASSADOR SNEIDER'S REMARKS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 19211 070846Z

3. IN GENERAL DISCUSSION, DEFMIN LEK NOTED THE "FRONT LINE" POSITION THAT THAILAND OCCUPIES IN SE ASIA. HE SAID THAT JAPAN AND THE U.S. NEEDED CONTINUED ACCESS TO THE NATIONS AND SEA LANES OF THIS AREA FOR THEIR OWN WELL-BEING. MINISTER LEK STRESSED THAT THAILAND WISHES THE U.S. TO MAINTAIN ITS POSITION AS A DEPENDABLE SUPPLIER OF THAILAND'S MILITARY EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS. THAILAND'S

DOES NOT RPT NOT WISH THE RETURN OF U.S. FORCES BUT BELIEVES THAT THE U.S. SHOULD SELL EQUIPMENT NEEDED BY RTG MILITARY FORCES TO DEFEND THE COUNTRY. NOTING THE INFLATIONARY AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN ITALY, IN CONNECTION WITH POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF AERMACCHI PLANES BY THE RTG, LEK COMMENTED THAT HE BELIEVES THAILAND SHOULD NOT RPT NOT TIE ITS DEFENSE NEEDS TO COUNTRIES WITH SUCH INSTABILITY. THE U.S. WAS THE PREFERRED SOURCE OF MILITARY SUPPLIES, IF POSSIBLE.

4. FONMIN UPPADIT TOLD AMBASSADOR SNEIDER THAT THE RTG HAS TWO CORNERSTONES IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY: (A) TO MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH ALL STATES REGARDLESS OF THEIR POLITICAL SYSTEMS OR SOCIAL STRUCTURES, AND (B) TO MAINTAIN THE CLOSEST OF TIES WITH THE OTHER ASEAN STATES. HE NOTED THAT EVENTUAL SUCCESS IN THAILAND'S FOREIGN POLICY WAS DEPENDENT ON THE "UNITY OF THE THAI PEOPLE," DERIVING FROM A PEACEFUL, PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY INCORPORATING SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS. THE RTG STRIVES FOR SUCH A SOCIETY FOR ITSELF.

5. REGARDING THE ASEAN-US MINITERIAL, UPPADIT CAUTIOUSLY NOTED THAT HE WAS "LIKELY" TO ATTEND. HE SAW NO DIFFICULTY IN FOCUSSED ON THE ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF MEETING BUT STRESSED HIS CONTINUING HOPE THAT "SOMETHING CONCRETE" WOULD COME FROM THE DISCUSSIONS IN THE ECONOMIC AREA. HE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 19211 070846Z

FOCUSSED PARTICULARLY ON INCREASED U.S. INVESTMENT.

6. IN TOUCHING ON CURRENT INDOCHINA SITUATION, UPPADIT EXPRESSED HOPE THAT U.S. WOULD UNDERSTAND AND SUPPORT THAILAND'S CURRENT FOREIGN POLICY EFFORTS WITH REGARD TO ITS COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS. MORE GENERALLY, HE NOTED THAT THAILAND IS THE "FRONT LINE " COUNTRY IN S.E. ASIA. HE SAID THAT THAILAND DOES NOT NEED THE RE INTRODUCTION OF U.S. MILITARY FORCES BUT THAT THAILAND DOES NEED ACCESS TO U.S. EQUIPMENT, HOPEFULLY ON CONCESSIONAL TERMS.

7. AMBASSADOR SNEIDER AND CHARGE ASSURED UPPADIT THAT THE USG FULLY UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED THE RTG EFFORTS TO FOLLOW A BALANCED FOREIGN POLICY MAINTAINING TIES WITH ITS ASEAN FRIEND, OURSELVES, AND OTHERS, WHILE TRYING TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ITS COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS.

8. COMMENT: AMBASSADOR SNEIDER'S VISIT WAS VERY HELPFUL HERE IN DEMONSTRATING OUR CONTINUING INTEREST IN DIALOGUE WITH THE RTG ON MAJOR REGIONAL ISSUES. WHILE THE THAI HAVE NOT BEEN OVERLY SENSITIVE TO KOREAN DEVELOPMENTS, LEK AND UPPADIT OBVIOUSLY APPRECIATED AMBASSADOR

SNEIDER'S EXPOSITION.

9. REGARDING ASEAN, UPPADIT CONTINUES TO AVOID FINALLY
COMMITTING QBNHF TO ATTENDING. HOWEVER, ALL OF HIS
SENIOR STAFF FULLY EXPECT HIM TO GO. MORE DETAILED
EXPOSITION OF CURRENT MFA THINKING ON ISSUE FOLLOWS
SEPTEL.

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